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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA TO THE P-5: TIME FOR ERITREA SANCTIONS

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin on May 22 called in the UNSC P-5 Ambassadors to urge them to follow-up on the InterGovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) May 20 call for Security Council sanctions against Eritrea and the imposition of a naval blockade and no-fly zone over southern Somalia in response to Eritrea's continued military support to al-Shabaab. Seyoum asserted that Somalia was becoming an international crisis that threatened to grow out of control, and he criticized the international community for "failing" to support the Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG). In a separate meeting with the P-5 ambassadors on May 25, Ethiopian State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Tekeda Alemu said he planned to travel to New York on May 29 to press the UNSC on Eritrea in person. End Summary.

Seyoum: Somalia Moving Beyond Threshold of Internal Conflict

¶2. (SBU) Seyoum opened by arguing that the involvement of Eritrea, Qatar, Iran, al-Qaeda, foreign fighters, and other non-Somali entities in Somalia had pushed the Somalia conflict into becoming an international crisis that the UN Security Council should not ignore. He urged the UNSC members to take the action endorsed by IGAD on May 20 that called for sanctions against Eritrea and the imposition of a no-fly zone and naval blockade over non-TFG controlled parts of Somalia. IGAD, he said, planned to draw up a list of individuals and entities known to be supporting the extremists in Somalia to be presented to the UN for sanctions. He highlighted the role of Canada, Qatar, and Iran in the conflict. Canada, he said, through its mining concessions, would soon be providing Eritrea with hundreds of millions of dollars, and he commented that "if you think Eritrea is a problem now with no economy, wait until it is flush with cash." Qatar and Iran were hiding behind Eritrea to provide support to the extremists, he insisted. Seyoum asserted that a failure to act now would impact the peace and security of the entire region, and allow the situation to "get completely out of hand."

Seyoum: International Community Failing to Support the TFG

¶3. (SBU) Seyoum strongly criticized the international community for promising support, but failing to deliver it, noting that the UN had been doing little except "observing and expressing concern." He said while the Brussels pledging conference had produced positive momentum in support of the TFG, his discussions with TFG Deputy Prime Minister Sharif Hassan revealed that the TFG had received "practically nil" of the promised support.

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador Yamamoto reminded Seyoum of the support the TFG had received and queried for specific suggestions on sanctions. Seyoum suggested that the UNSC consider an arms embargo, travel bans, and other similar "measures" against Eritrea. The French and Russian representatives noted that perhaps it was time for a "gear change" regarding Eritrea, and they promised to consult with their capitals. The UK representative informed Seyoum that a lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the TFG prohibited the international community from giving direct funding. Seyoum retorted that the international community had the expertise and resources to find a solution to that problem if it so desired. The Chinese ambassador reminded the group of China's positive role in the region.

Tekeda Planning to Travel to New York May 29

¶5. (SBU) On May 25, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Tekeda Alemu met with representatives of the P-5 to inform them that he planned to travel to New York on May 29 where he would be joined by the UN Ambassadors from Djibouti and Kenya to follow-up on IGAD's finding with the UNSC. The P-5 ambassadors told Tekeda that they would seek advice from their respective capitals on the issue.

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Yamamoto cautioned Tekeda that the UNSC had yet to enforce UNSCR 1863 which called for sanctions against Eritrea for failure to withdraw from Djiboutian territory, and observed that it would be difficult for the

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Security Council to consider additional sanctions before addressing UNSCR 1863. Further, the Ambassador noted, the UN would find it impossible to enforce a no-fly zone or port blockade no matter how compelling the arguments presented by IGAD. Finally, the Ambassador cautioned that the new U.S. administration was still forming its Somalia policy, but he promised to confer with Washington and USUN on possible reactions to the IGAD initiative. The Ambassador added that the best one might hope for now was a UN presidential statement or a resolution in support of the IGAD process, but not sanctions.

YAMAMOTO